

Payment Processors Have a Role in Reducing Gambling Harms

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New Guidelines Advocate Consumer-Centric Approach

WASHINGTON, DC (February 3, 2020) – The lifeblood of gambling is money, which is increasingly available through more channels and with greater speed. Money moves rapidly through multiple hands in the gambling ecosystem, and among them are financial institutions and other third-party companies that process payments.

These corporations can play a critical role in reducing the negative consequences associated with gambling, the most severe of which can include debt, bankruptcy, broken relationships, homelessness, or even suicide. For companies that make profits from gambling, harm-reduction measures are both a sound business practice and an essential corporate social responsibility.

Each type of payment used for gambling—from cash to credit cards to PayPal—can impact how quickly and easily individuals may access more money, how much they can obtain at a time, and add additional costs, such as ATM fees or interest charges. Recent payment innovations such as e-wallets, along with the availability of on-demand access to digital payments, could increase the willingness of consumers to spend more or gamble beyond their means in the heat of play.

These new systems also shift more risk to consumers and remove protective factors, such as the need to pause game play to replenish cash. But new technologies can also be part of the solution, by enabling individuals to set responsible limits for themselves.

The newly-released Guidelines for Payments Processing from the National Council on Problem Gambling will help guide the industry's thinking about solutions to this issue. "Payment limits can be an important responsible gambling tool, offering a consumer-centric approach that emphasizes player control, information, and shared responsibility," said Keith Whyte, executive director of the National Council on Problem Gambling. "Our guidelines are based on an informed consumer choice model and can help payment processors play an important role in reducing gambling addiction."

Unlike the United Kingdom, where credit card use for gambling is now prohibited due to public backlash, some states in the US where gambling is legal allow credit cards for gambling. To sustain this business model, the industry must pay attention to potential negative outcomes and work to prevent them.

Gambling operators, vendors, payment processors, financial institutions, regulators – and people who gamble – all have important roles to play in minimizing potential harm from gambling activities. NCPG calls on all stakeholders to:

–encourage people who gamble to set their own limits of time and money

- use personalized responsible gambling messages
- allow players to self-exclude from gambling platforms and venues
- allow players to synchronize their exclusions with venue and state exclusion lists
- research signs of problematic play
- utilize the payments data they collect to monitor performance
- develop models to help predict and prevent excessive usage

Additional recommendations may be found in the full Guidelines. They include specific items on the following topics: limits; Know Your Customer (KYC); access by players to information about and in their own accounts and transaction history; self-exclusion; and research.

Many of these recommendations were first set out in NCPG's Internet Responsible Gambling Standards, but these payments guidelines are intended to apply broadly to all forms of gambling and guide stakeholders across the industry. NCPG welcomes feedback on these guidelines and expects to continue to refine these recommendations.

For a copy of the full document, Guidelines for Payments Processing, please [click here](#).